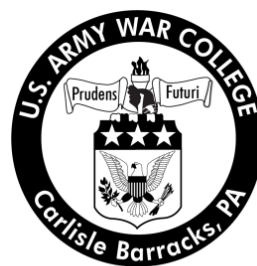


# Civilian Research Project Senior Service College Fellow

## China: The Awakened Dragon

by

Colonel Viet X. Luong  
United States Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2012

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by

Colonel Viet X. Luong  
United States Army

Dr. William J. Perry  
Project Adviser

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U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013



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While Chinese leaders continue to tout the clarity of China's strategic intentions, China's pursuit of advanced military capabilities, including anti-access and force projection, offers a different perception. China prospered while the United States has been engulfed in Afghanistan and Iraq, America's longest war to date. On the home front, the war inarguably contributed to an economic crisis and a divided nation. Meanwhile, China has experienced tremendous growth, not only economically, but also militarily. China, spurred by recent economic success, continues to pursue greater military capabilities to protect its resources and extend its influence. If this trend continues, China and the United States may be on track for increased tension in the future.

This paper will examine China's strategic intentions and military capabilities. It will also look at current U.S. strategic engagement with China and conclude with some policy recommendations.





## **CHINA THE AWAKENED DRAGON**

China's rapid military modernization will allow the People's Republic of China (PRC) to achieve its goals of making "major progress in military modernization by 2020" and "capable of winning informationized wars by the mid 21st Century."<sup>1</sup> According to a leading China scholar, while this may mean that China's leaders are not planning to win wars against military powers like the United States until 2050, the PRC will have superiority over many nations well before then.<sup>2</sup> To address China's meteoric rise, both economic and military, rather than taking a piecemeal approach, the United States needs a more comprehensive U.S.-China policy. Without a more effective U.S. policy, China's continued pursuit of advanced military capabilities and aggressive extension beyond China's traditional zone of influence may lead to military confrontations with the United States and its allies in the Pacific.<sup>3</sup>

An open U.S.-China military conflict, especially one that could lead to nuclear weapons, would undoubtedly be cataclysmic. As such, neither side is likely to pursue such a course of action. On the other hand, by 2020 China will likely possess the operational and strategic capabilities to resolve militarily the Taiwan issue or other emerging territorial disputes. Whether and how the PRC leadership might exercise these capabilities remains an open question; however, historically, China has often resorted to the use of force.<sup>4</sup> While Chinese leaders tout the clarity of China's peaceful strategic intentions, China's pursuit of naval carriers, advanced stealth aircraft and anti-satellite missiles offer a very different perception; thereby, putting in question the clarity of China's strategic intentions.

## The Chinese Strategic Culture

The Chinese have long been masters of strategic thought, as numerous examples of China's strategic culture clearly demonstrate. The philosophies of Confucius and Sun Tzu have heavily influenced Chinese military and strategic thinking, and Chinese military theorists often argue that this influence leads China to be militarily cautious and defensive, even in the face of conflict. According to one analyst, China's preference of stratagem over war is a hybrid of Confucius' peaceful harmony and Sun Tzu's advocacy of diplomacy over war.<sup>5</sup> Over the years, PRC leaders have repeatedly stressed the Chinese proclivity for peace and harmony and China has consistently inculcated the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" into its foreign policy.<sup>6</sup> Along the same lines, in 2010 a leading Chinese diplomat, Bao Bingguo, noted that the "path of peaceful development" is "the pursuit of harmony and development at home as well as the pursuit of peace and cooperation in our external relations."<sup>7</sup>

Despite China's efforts to portray itself as a peaceful nation, PRC actions in the last several decades do not always support such claims. In fact, leading China scholars have fiercely debated over this very issue.<sup>8</sup> When assessing Chinese strategic culture, these analysts predominantly fall into two main groups. One group views China as a deeply strategic, culturally defensive nation, while the other group asserts that a realpolitik offensive mindset guides China's policy makers and its foreign policies.<sup>9</sup> Certain leading scholars among the latter group also describe China's strategic culture as "strategic parabellum" or a combination of "Confucian and parabellum", which leads to an offensive realist grand strategy.<sup>10</sup> However, in her work "*Chinese Strategic Culture and Policy Decision-Making: Confucianism, Leadership, and War*", Huiyun Feng argued

that while the advocates conclude, "China has always been, and will continue to be a revisionist power", her research, on the other hand, concluded "...Chinese leaders are likely to exhibit strategic defense rather than offensive preferences. At times of threats to vital interests, however, force is wielded in righteous response."<sup>11</sup>

In supporting her argument, Feng uses quantitative content analysis of Chinese leaders' public statements and qualitative case studies on the strategic thinking of key Chinese leaders during the Korean, Sino-Indian, and Sino-Vietnamese wars.<sup>12</sup> Although Feng's work is deeply thorough, her conclusion that "overall, the preceding analysis of Chinese decision-making in three wars during the cold war era indicates that China's use of force was defensive in nature, depending remarkably on key leaders' beliefs and perceptions of threat from the external environment and domestic situations," is not particularly convincing, especially in reference to the three case studies in her work: China's offensive actions during the Korean, Sino-Indian, and Sino-Vietnamese wars.<sup>13</sup>

In the case of the Korean War, there may be some credence to Chinese claims that the advance of the U.S.-led UN coalition north of the 38th parallel posed a direct threat to China and justified PLA intervention. Preemptively attacking into India and Vietnam during the Sino-Indian and Sino-Vietnamese wars; however, does not support the argument that China's strategic culture is defensive or one that promotes harmony. Commenting on these wars, Sinologist Allen Whiting cited the PRC's propensity to strike first and seize the initiative. Whiting concluded: "The PLA has repeatedly projected its power across China's borders, at times increasing the risk of war...To be sure, various steps were adopted to lessen the risk of escalation, but they were minor by comparison with actions that heightened the risk."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Deng Xiao Ping's decision to invade Vietnam came from the assessment that the war would catapult China's military

modernization while the risk of Soviet interference and negative worldviews were unlikely.<sup>15</sup> This offensive strategy, based on calculating the second and third order effects of an outcome, is more consistent with Sun Tzu (offensive) than Confucius (defensive).<sup>16</sup>

Chinese author Nie Hongyi's 2009 article in the Chinese *Journal of International Politics* offered a different perspective to Feng's. Nie challenged M. Taylor Fravel's theory that a rising power's domestic stability drives its actions.<sup>17</sup> Fravel believed that when a state is domestically unstable, it is prone to adopt a "concessionary approach" to territory disputes to stabilize its domestic political power. To dispute Fravel's claims, Nie cited several case studies where China had adopted a concessionary stance during the same period the PRC was using a hard-line stance against India.<sup>18</sup> Nie concluded, "the analysis of the logic behind China's selection of policies towards neighbor states with which it shares land borders reveals the hard-line approach to expansionary powers, and concessionary approach towards status quo states."<sup>19</sup> This theory offers an alternative explanation to Feng's conclusions on the same case studies, and in some ways, better accounts for Chinese offensive actions not only in India and Vietnam, but also on Zhenbao Island against the Soviets in 1969, despite immense risks from Soviet retribution.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps a more accurate hypothesis on the duality of Chinese strategic culture is Andrew's Scobell's theory of "Chinese Cult of Defense." Scobell maintains that China's strategic culture is dualistic, a hybrid of Confucian-Mencian harmony and risk aversion coupled with realpolitik tendencies.<sup>21</sup> To justify offensive actions during these

crises, Chinese military theorists often refer to these offensive actions as falling under the concept of active defense.<sup>22</sup>

### Chinese Perception of Sovereignty and Friction in the Disputed Territories

The concept of active defense by itself is not alarming. However, as China's influence increased along with its strategic reach, what the Chinese consider "sovereign" has grown to encompass the South and East China Seas, including multiple disputed territories.<sup>23</sup> According to some Pentagon analysts, this perception of sovereignty poses risks to U.S. interests in the Pacific.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, Chinese claims of "indisputable sovereignty" and assertiveness in the Pacific raise concerns among some China analysts. While China's view of Taiwan as part of its historical sovereign territory is hardly contested outside Taiwan, Chinese claims to disputed territories, which include four groups of contested islets and atolls, have led to confrontations.<sup>25</sup> These confrontations occurred despite Chinese rhetoric in the late 1990s through the early 2000s about China adopting a more peaceful approach to resolving territorial disputes. The PRC even signed the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and subsequently conducted a joint resource survey of natural resources around the Spratly Islands with Vietnam and the Philippines.<sup>26</sup> However, this cooperative spirit failed to last and PRC actions after 2005 suggest that China has become more and more confrontational.

But one example of this confrontational attitude would be Chinese actions in the South China Sea in April 2010. On April 29, 2010, a Malaysian Navy missile boat pursued PRC Fisheries Administration's ship, the Yuzheng 311, when the latter

steamed too close to Malaysia's Swallow/Danwan Reef. During the long chase, the Yuzheng returned to the atoll, sailing within only 300 meters of the missile boat.<sup>27</sup>

In June 2010, the Yuzheng 311 confronted an Indonesian patrol boat after the latter seized a Chinese fishing vessel operating near Indonesia's Natuna Islands. The Yuzheng 311 forcibly compelled the patrol boat to release the fishing vessel. In the course of the stand-off, The Yusheng 311 used aggressive tactics, including pointing its main guns at the Indonesian patrol boat. Repeating a similar pattern in September 2010, Chinese Fisheries officials detained nine Vietnamese fishermen near the Paracels Islands, causing a diplomatic incident.<sup>28</sup>

PRC confrontation also occurred in the East China Sea. Currently, China is involved in a dispute with Japan over the Senkaku Islands. In September 2010, Japanese authorities apprehended a Chinese crew after a collision between a Chinese fishing trawler and a Japanese Coast Guard ship. This incident raised the already heightened tension between China and Japan to a concerning level. In response, China demanded the immediate release of the captain and crew, and applied what some observers considered disproportionate pressure of Japan.<sup>29</sup> China's actions raised the issue to international levels and caused the United States to reemphasize that its security alliance with Japan encompassed all areas under Japanese administration.<sup>30</sup>

China's confrontations were not limited to its Asian neighbors. In March 2009, China interfered with the USS *Impeccable's* surveillance operations near Hainan Island. Although in international waters, a PLAN intelligence ship, a Fisheries Administration vessel, a State Oceanographic Administration patrol boat, and two fishing trawlers surrounded the *Impeccable*, forced it to halt, and also tried to snag its towed acoustic

array sonar. As a result, the United States lodged a formal complaint against China after the incident.<sup>31</sup> In response, China declared, "China conducts activities in its own economic zones (EEZ) to defend its rights and interests...such activities are justified and lawful."<sup>32</sup>

According to China analyst Richard Fisher, in addition to historical use of force and increased assertiveness with its neighbors, China continues to make foreign policy choices that threaten U.S. national security. These choices include proliferating nuclear weapon and missile technology to North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan and conducting a "massive program of global espionage."<sup>33</sup> Although China maintains that it seeks a peaceful rise, the PRC's aggressive stance and policy choices pose challenges for the United States.

#### China's Military Modernization

Rationalized by protecting its stated core interests and expanding sovereign territory, China may continue to justify aggressive actions under the "active defense" of "sovereign territories." To ensure the capabilities needed for successful military power, the PRC has undertaken a rapid military modernization.

According to some authors, China in the near term will not be able to challenge the United States directly in the Pacific.<sup>34</sup> Their arguments include the disparity between current U.S. and Chinese military capabilities, the technology gap between the two countries, and comparatively small Chinese defense spending. Other observers agree with this assessment, but have argued that while these challenges likely inhibit China from challenging the United States globally in the near term, China will soon have the capabilities to challenge the United States regionally in the Pacific.<sup>35</sup>

China's military modernization program in the last decade, supported by a relatively surging economy and expanding defense sector, has allowed China effectively to narrow much of the technology gap and will likely allow the PRC to achieve regional hegemony in the near future.<sup>36</sup>

Buoyed by strong economic growth, Pentagon analysts estimated China's military budget increased an average of 12.1 percent annually from 2000 to 2010.<sup>37</sup> In 2011, the PRC announced a 12.7 percent increase in its military budget to \$91.5 billion; however, according to Pentagon analysts the actual budget is closer to \$180 billion.<sup>38</sup> Even at the announced spending of \$91.5 billion, China still ranks second in the world in annual defense spending.

According to some researchers, China's decelerating economy may not have a large impact on future defense spending. As the global economic crisis continued, a financial analyst noted in December 2011 that China's 2011 GDP growth would end up at over 9%. Although not the double-digit figures of the previous decade, it still represents significant growth.<sup>39</sup> While difficult to predict accurately the growth of China's economy throughout this next decade, the financial firm Morgan Stanley forecasted that the Chinese economy will begin to decelerate, but by a "soft landing" of between 7.7 and 8.4 percent in 2012.<sup>40</sup> Regardless, whether this level of growth or even a slower growth of five percent continues into the future, one analyst concluded, "China will be able to maintain or even increase its military spending."<sup>41</sup> Thus, given the economic forecasts, the PLA will still be able to continue its modernization program.<sup>42</sup>

These conditions have allowed for great strides in China's defense sector for further growth in defense spending for among other things, space and missile



technology, 5th generation fighter aircraft, nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, anti-ship ballistic missiles, and large amphibious assault ships.<sup>43</sup> According to RAND researchers, these efforts were also China's response to U.S. military transformation.<sup>44</sup>

A 2006 RAND National Defense Research Institute published a report that outlined four notional options for PRC response to U.S. transformation:

- Conventional Modernization Plus
- Subversion, Sabotage, and Information Operations
- The Missile Centric Strategy
- Chinese Network-Centric Warfare

Option 1 is called "Conventional Modernization Plus."<sup>45</sup> This option focuses on "seizing the initiative" and "attacking centers of gravity", or more precisely, striking "key points."<sup>46</sup> Under Option 1, the PRC would focus on improving PLA conventional capabilities, to include space, air, naval, and missile forces to conduct area denial and anti-access operations against a wide variety of targets and vulnerabilities.<sup>47</sup>

Option 2 "Subversion, Sabotage, and Information Operations," involves attacking the "will of the Taiwanese People and U.S. military intervention." Analysts reasoned that Option 2 would include "full spectrum information operations," and may include not only psychological and intelligence operations, but also subversion and sabotage by special operations forces and computer network attack units. In this notional scenario, the effects of full spectrum information operations would result in wearing down the will of the Taiwanese people, subsequently causing the government to collapse and resort to peaceful negotiations under China's terms.<sup>48</sup>

Option 3, the "Missile Centric Strategies," would rely on building up the missile force to dominate Taiwan, threaten U.S. bases in Asia-Pacific, and target U.S. strategic targets with conventional ballistic missiles.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, under Option 4, "Chinese Network-Centric Warfare," the PLA would modernize PLA command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR). In this option, PLA forces would use its own enhanced C4ISR capabilities to provide effective command and control of its forces while being able to disrupt, detect, and target U.S. and Taiwanese high-tech dependant, network-centric forces in the event of conflict.<sup>50</sup>

RAND analysts concluded, based on information available at the time, that Option 1 was most the most feasible.<sup>51</sup> However, PRC military modernization and known capabilities such as stealth, advanced missile, anti-satellite, 5th generation fighters, cyber, nuclear submarines, and carrier fleets suggest that China may be pursuing a modernization course of action that is a hybrid of all four options.

Indeed, the 2010 Defense White Paper provided hints of a balanced modernization approach.

Published in March 2011, the Defense White Paper for 2010 outlined four national defense goals:<sup>52</sup>

- Safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and interests of national development.
- Maintaining social harmony and stability.
- Accelerating the modernization of national defense and armed forces.
- Maintaining world peace and stability.

Beyond these general statements of Chinese interests and intent, the paper emphasized that "China strives to build, through its peaceful development, a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity" and "national defense policy that is defensive in nature." The 2010 Defense White Paper also revealed some insights into Chinese perception of threats and its military modernization strategy to meet these challenges.<sup>53</sup> For instance, the issue of Taiwan independence resonated throughout the paper, specifically stating, "Taiwan independence separatist force and its activities are still the biggest obstacles and threat to the peaceful development of cross straits relation." In addition, the paper raised concerns about U.S. reinforcement of military alliances in the region and "impairing peaceful development of cross straits relations" through the sale of U.S. weapons to Taiwan.<sup>54</sup>

Specific to military modernization, the paper declared, "the PLA has expanded and made profound preparations for military struggle."<sup>55</sup> As examples, it highlighted the PLA Army's mechanization and digitization initiatives, PLA Navy's modernization to enhance strategic deterrence capabilities and operations in distant waters, and PLA Air Force's development of a force capable of "air strikes, air and missile defense, and strategic projection under an informationized environment."<sup>56</sup>

The paper also addressed building joint systems and accelerating the development of high tech weaponry.<sup>57</sup> Based on studying U.S. technological advantages demonstrated in recent conflicts, Chinese military scholars also began to question Deng's outdated policy of focusing on the economy and foreign policy instead of military transformation.<sup>58</sup> In fact, active debate amongst Chinese military and civilian

analysts has resulted in some senior officers' advocacy for force projection and expansion of capabilities beyond regional disputes.<sup>59</sup>

Western military analysts have also taken note of the PRC's military modernization. One scholar argued that China's expanding "strategic economic and security interests" place its military on course to be a global power."<sup>60</sup> Citing the 2006 China Defense White Paper which included goals for the PLA to make "major progress by 2020" and "capable of winning informationized wars by the mid 21st century," he concluded that while this may mean that China's leaders are not planning on winning wars against military powers like the United States until 2050, the PLA will gain military superiority over many regional nations (and U.S. allies) well before then.<sup>61</sup> Along the same lines, Pentagon analysts have predicted that China is well on its way to achieving major progress by 2020, and "current trends in China's military capabilities could provide China with a force capable of conducting a range of military operations in Asia well beyond Taiwan."<sup>62</sup>

To this end, according to the 2010 China Defense White paper, the PLA Army (PLAA) is making "great progress" in its mechanization and digitization processes while improving its combat systems, to include light, heavy, amphibious and airborne assault forces. The paper also mentioned the transformation of the PLAA's aviation wing from a support force to a "main battle assault force."<sup>63</sup> Of the 1.2 million PLAA force, roughly 400,000 are deployed in the three military regions (MRs) directly across the straits from Taiwan. Pentagon sources indicate that much of the PLAA force modernization has occurred in these MRs, to include the Type 99 third generation main battle tank and modern amphibious assault vehicles.<sup>64</sup>

The Pentagon also reports that as of December 2010, the military regions opposite Taiwan possessed 1000-1200 short-range ballistic missiles, many of which are highly accurate, with ranges beyond 185 kilometers. This impressive array also contained the YJ-62 anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) and the DH-10 land attack cruise missile, both Chinese made.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, China is developing an anti-ship ballistic missile, the DF-21D, with an extended range beyond 1500 km, which can threaten moving ships, including large aircraft carriers.<sup>66</sup>

The 2010 China White Paper also highlighted key developments in the PLA Navy (PLAN) and PLA Air Force (PLAAF). Under the White Paper, the PLAN focuses on "accelerating" the modernization of its combat forces, enhancing its ability conduct counter-attack and deterrence, and developing capabilities to conduct "operations in distant waters and countering non-traditional security threats."<sup>67</sup> To support this goal, the PLAN has upgraded its submarine fleet, which may have up to 35 new conventional and nuclear submarines currently in service.<sup>68</sup> The surface force is also undergoing significant transformation. The PLAN currently deploys about 75 large surface combatants, 55 amphibious ships, and 85 small combatants, including several domestically produced Luyang II-class and Luzhou-class surface combatants.<sup>69</sup> Armed with numerous long-range surface to air missiles, these destroyers provide outstanding air defense protection, particularly when the fleet is deployed outside the umbrella of shore units.<sup>70</sup> An array of maritime strike aircraft, capable of deploying ASCMs, would provide additional air defense augmentation to these destroyers.

To enhance its own force protection and targeting enemy targets, China has significantly increased the PLAN's ability for early warning and detection. Using sky

wave and surface wave radars in concert with reconnaissance aircraft and satellites, the PLAN has increase its strategic strike capabilities, to include the ability to targeting U.S. ships and bases in the Western Pacific. Equally interesting is China's pursuit of a carrier fleet. Pentagon analysts believe that China is pursuing an indigenous aircraft carrier program based on the design of the former Soviet Kusnetsov Hull-2. If this is correct, China could have its first indigenous carrier by 2015.<sup>71</sup> Granted, an operational carrier fleet will take many years to realize; however, this strategy is another sign that China's strategy may lie beyond local waters.

Like the PLAN, the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) also has made significant progress. According to the 2010 China Defense White Paper, the PLAAF's goals include "development of a combat structure that focuses on airstrike, air and missile defense, and strategic projection, to improve its leadership and command system and build up an informationized, networked base support system."<sup>72</sup> According to one analyst, in addition to accelerated acquisition of fourth-generation combat aircraft, China may have several 5th generation tactical aircraft programs on-going."<sup>73</sup> In January 2011, China pointedly unveiled the J-20 stealth fighter during Defense Secretary Robert Gates' visit to Beijing.

In addition to sustained PLAN and PLAAF modernization, China is making great strides in space and cyber capabilities. Recognizing its own concept of networked operations and its adversaries' dependency on information networks, China's computer network operations encompass computer network defense, computer network attack and exploitation. According to some U.S. DOD analysts, the 2010 cyber intrusion of numerous computer systems around the world, including those of the U.S. government,

originated from China.<sup>74</sup> This capability allows the PLA to target command and control systems, disrupt logistics during a conflict and collect information and intelligence prior to hostilities.

Also in 2010, China launched 15 satellites into space. These were combinations of navigation, remote sensing, communications, and meteorological systems. Pentagon analysts believe the navigation satellites will give China a regional network by 2012 and a global one by 2015. They also assert that China is producing in parallel, “a multi-dimensional program to limit or prevent the use of space-based assets by adversaries during times of crisis or conflict.”<sup>75</sup> For example, in 2007, China shot down one of its own satellites with an SC-19 anti-satellite (ASAT) missile.<sup>76</sup>

To keep up with this accelerated military modernization, China requires a strong technology sector. Despite the enormous technology gap that existed between the United States and China a mere decade ago, China's emerging research, development, and production capabilities, coupled with reforms and innovation, have resulted in several impressive domestically produced high-tech systems. China was able to close the gap through foreign acquisitions and capitalizing on dual-use technology. When this technology is not available commercially or through academic research, China uses its intelligence services to acquire information through illicit means.<sup>77</sup>

#### Possible PRC Military Courses of Action

While the friction in the disputed territories may lead to wider conflict, Taiwan remains one of the most significant flashpoints in the Pacific. Since 1949, the China has viewed Taiwan as part of its sovereign territory. Over the years, China has openly declared that it would resort to military force if Taiwan were to declare independence. In

1949, the Taiwan issue was a matter of national pride and historical sovereignty. Over time, the issue has become more important from a strategy perspective.

If China's current military modernization continues at current pace, this author assesses that long before 2050, in the event of a Taiwanese declaration of independence, China would likely have two credible military courses of action: Hard and Soft. Under the "Hard Course of Action", the most dangerous notional scenario, China would exercise operational security, deception, and surprise prior to hostilities. The PLA would execute Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions to determine disposition of Taiwanese and U.S. forces and answer prioritized intelligence requirements for PRC decision makers. The PLA would also use a combination of computer network attack (CNA), tactical and strategic strikes, including the use of anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles, against Taiwan's Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) to degrade the latter's ability to see the battlefield, establish command and control, and execute logistical operations. The missile force would conduct massive tactical strikes against Taiwanese military targets to deter effective response. Meanwhile, the PLAN would initiate a naval blockade with its surface and submarine fleet, and conduct maritime land attack in support of the invasion force. PLAN anti-ship systems, along with land-based assets would target Taiwanese naval assets while its naval air wing would provide combat air patrol to protect PLAN assets and the amphibious assault force. The PLAAF would establish local air superiority over the Taiwan. The PLAAF would include air and missile defense, ISR and early warning, tactical and strategic strikes, and air mobility in support of the invasion force. At the same time, the PLAAF in joint operations with the



PLAN, would conduct anti-access and area denial missions to keep U.S. forces from interference. Meanwhile, the PLAA would carry out amphibious and air assault operations to seize key objectives. PLAA special operations forces would target key facilities, government headquarters, and Taiwanese leadership. Psychological operations would try to convince the Taiwanese populace that the war is unwinnable to force early capitulation. Chinese leaders would warn the United States not to interfere in internal matters at the risk of retaliation.

Under the Soft Course of Action, China would continue to modernize its military with the main aim of psychologically coercing the Taiwanese populace into peacefully accepting the “One China” concept. The PLA would conduct joint maneuver exercises in the South China Sea and military regions directly across the straits from Taiwan. Diplomatically, China would foster stronger ties to the Taiwanese Kuo Ming Tang government and adopt measures to limit U.S. involvement in the Pacific. China would also attempt to establish stronger ties with U.S. allies to erode U.S. prestige in the region. Covertly, China would seek to create turmoil in the Taiwanese government by encouraging agitation by “One China” advocates. China also might interfere in the political process to ensure the Kuo Ming Tang stays in power instead of the Pro-Independence Party.

While both courses of action may fall within PRC capabilities, the Soft Course of Action is more likely for several reasons. Primarily, China risks too much in pursuing the Hard Course of Action in the near future. In addition to risking war against the United States, China continues to face domestic challenges at home, to include political and social unrest, environmental issues, and economic downturn. Political unrest

ranges from ethnic and regional, in Xinjiang and Tibet, to religious and political in the case of Fa Lun Gong.<sup>78</sup> The PRC response to the independent movement for ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang has been equally oppressive.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, in the social sphere, China faces internal pressure from its populace. Uneven growth created great and growing disparity between the wealthy and poor. In addition, China has experienced increased popular criticism on several issues, including PRC suppression of reports on Melamine contaminated milk and corruption that led to shoddy construction of schools that collapsed during the Sichuan earthquake. On top of social issues, China also faces environmental issues. According to a 2007 World Bank Report, China spends about 6 percent of the country's GDP on water and air pollution costs.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, China is self-deterred from a military conflict with the United States due to the interdependency of the two economies. Chinese foreign direct investments into the United States reached \$4.9 billion as of 2010.<sup>81</sup> Currently, bilateral trades between the two nations are approaching \$500 billion. In addition, the PRC had stored \$2 trillion in balance of payment surplus in U.S. securities.<sup>82</sup>

As such, growing domestic challenges and economic interdependence with the United States, would most likely preclude China from starting a war in the Pacific. Nevertheless, frequent confrontations with its neighbors or a Taiwanese declaration of independence may ignite an unwanted military confrontation or conflict in the Pacific. As such, the United States must be prepared for the most dangerous scenario, while pursuing a comprehensive and consistent engagement policy with China.<sup>83</sup>

## U.S.-China Policy

U.S.-China policy has shifted over the years. In the six decades since Mao's victory over the Nationalists, U.S. policy for China has transitioned from containment, to alignment, and finally "conengagement."

After communist victory 1949 that ended the Chinese Civil War, the United States implemented a strategy of containment. This strategy entailed not only physical isolation, but also economic and diplomatic isolation of China. The main goals of the strategy were to slow China's growth, cause it to expend resources on domestic issues, and propagate Sino-Soviet tensions.<sup>84</sup>

The Korean War heightened tensions between the United States and China. In addition to freezing Chinese assets and imposing a total trade embargo, the United States actively sought international political sanctions and condemnation of China.<sup>85</sup> Truman further infuriated China when he ordered the 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Straits to protect Taiwan and allegedly prevent Taiwan from attacking the mainland. To the Chinese, this was a flagrant violation of Chinese sovereignty.<sup>86</sup> Most significant, this action helped create the "two Chinas" dilemma.<sup>87</sup>

At the conclusion of the Korean War, the United States began physical containment of China through the establishment of bases and alliances throughout the Pacific. The United States signed mutual defense pacts with Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea. The United States also helped create the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, which consisted of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Great Britain, and France.<sup>88</sup> Diplomatically, the United States refused to recognize the Beijing government.

Diplomats carried the policy as far as refusing to shake hands with their counterparts, as in the case of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Zhou Enlai during the 1954 Geneva Convention.<sup>89</sup> Advocates of this strategy suggested that a diplomatically isolated China that did not hold sovereign status would be precluded from United Nations membership and would lack an “aura of prestige and permanence,” and over time would collapse or give up its revolutionary challenge to the free world.<sup>90</sup> As part of the containment, the United States continued to economically isolate China with a trade embargo that would last through the next two decades.

Based on where China is now, it is difficult to assess to what extent the containment strategy has worked. Critics of this strategy assert that, while the policy delayed PRC goals after the war; overall, it largely failed because by isolating China, this policy "ensured that Sino-American relations would remain poisoned for the next 15 years".<sup>91</sup> According to one observer, the relationship between the United States and China went from "rancorous coexistence to virulent."<sup>92</sup> Another author added that the United States during this period "forgot the sound geo-political, economic, and ethical basis of their historic desire for China's wellbeing" by adopting a policy to prevent a strong, prosperous China.<sup>93</sup> One thing for certain is that the containment strategy prevented high-level communication between the two governments and despite minimal contacts between mid-level officials, diplomatic relations remained non-existent, and along with it any meaningful cooperation.<sup>94</sup>

By the late 60s, U.S. leaders began to realize the ineffectiveness of the containment strategy and called for a broad shift. One of the catalysts that helped define U.S.-China relations in the 1970s and 1980s was the increasing threat of the Soviet

Union to both parties. On the heels of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Soviet rulers implemented an expansive plan of military modernization and build-up. According to some Western experts, by the early 1970s, the Soviets were beginning to erase the “gap quality and technological sophistication” enjoyed by U.S. forces.<sup>95</sup> Fueled by a common threat, the United States and China drew diplomatically closer. In 1969, the Sino-Soviet border conflict provided a great opportunity for the Nixon administration to deepen U.S. ties with China, moving into a relationship some scholars describe as a “strategic alignment.” Under this new relationship, the goal shifted from weakening to strengthening China. The United States, despite some reservations, began selling dual-use systems such as ground stations for satellite televisions, civilian aircraft, and computers.<sup>96</sup>

In 1973, the Soviets again threatened to attack China. The United States offered China assistance in the form of “supplying equipment and other services.”<sup>97</sup> But, despite stronger language for commitment, U.S. leaders chose not to normalize U.S.-PRC relations due to strong domestic political opposition. By 1975, the fear of a Soviet attack on China had subsided. U.S. leaders were also less wary of China’s challenge to American interests in the Pacific and the United States began reducing its military footprint in the region. The principal argument supporting this move was to reduce a threatening posture on Beijing and lessen the provocation for the Soviet Union to expand in the area.<sup>98</sup>

U.S.-China relations remained much the same for the next few years until President Jimmy Carter came into office. Under his leadership, normalization with China became a priority.<sup>99</sup> The Soviets were again on the move. According to Henry Kissinger,

"Soviet pressures in Africa and the Middle East convinced the President to opt for rapid normalization with China, by what amounted to the quest for a de facto strategic alliance."<sup>100</sup>

In 1978, President Carter sent his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski to China. Brzezinski found the Chinese receptive.<sup>101</sup> Despite optimism on both sides, the United States and China had to work out several differences. China's conditions for normalization remained withdrawal of American forces from Taiwan, establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing, and ending the defense treaty with Taiwan.<sup>102</sup> In a compromise, Carter and Deng agreed to a "One China" policy with the peaceful resolution to the Taiwan issue. Deng also acquiesced to the unspecified arms sales to Taiwan.<sup>103</sup>

In 1979, the Carter administration adopted the "One China" policy, recognizing Beijing as the sole government of China and severing official ties with Taiwan.<sup>104</sup> In response to the winding down of American diplomatic presence in Taiwan, the U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. The act sought to promote "peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific" and "the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan." This law also allows the United States to "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan."<sup>105</sup>

In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan; thereby drawing China and the United States even closer. Despite China's own aggression in invading Vietnam during

the same year, U.S. leaders decided to bolster deeper alignment with China. In addition to several visits by high-ranking officials, President Carter authorized the addition of several more dual-use nonlethal military systems, including over-the-horizon radar, aircraft, and communications hardware.<sup>106</sup> These high level visits facilitated increased military-to-military exchanges. In a historic move, PLA General Geng Biao and Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Liu Huaqing visited the United States in 1980. In return, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering William Perry led a U.S. delegation to Beijing in September of the same year. During his visit, Under Secretary Perry informed the Chinese that the U.S. government had approved over 400 licenses for dual-use and military support items.<sup>107</sup> However, China was experiencing internal and economic issues. In addition, Chinese industries were unprepared to accept a large volume of high technology. Although the meeting did not result in increased Chinese acquisition of U.S. technology, it paved the way for increased military-to-military relations.<sup>108</sup>

The policy of alignment continued without major change under the subsequent Reagan administration. During the 1980s, U.S. leaders still saw the Soviet Union as the biggest risk to national security. Thus, a strengthened China would be central to the global balance. Key statesman like Secretary of State Alexander Haig advocated for the sale of lethal weapons to provide the PRC the ability to defend against a Soviet invasion. The Reagan administration also sought to widen military-to-military contact from the traditional visits to bilateral unit training and full-up combined exercises.<sup>109</sup>

In 1983, Defense Secretary, Casper Weinberger visited Beijing and facilitated a series of exchanges between Chinese and U.S. military officers and civilian officials.<sup>110</sup>

This improved alignment lasted for much of the decade and helped create a more positive perception of China among the American populace. According to a U.S. poll in the 1989, China's favorable to unfavorable ratio was about 2 to 1, roughly the exact inverse of a similar poll in 1970s. As positive popular opinion rose, so did the willingness to increase cooperation. By the late 1980s, the United States was ready to increase weapon sales to China. The menu for this new package included radars, avionics for fighter aircraft, turbine engines, anti-tank missiles, and air defense systems.<sup>111</sup>

Despite U.S. optimism regarding the renewed relationship, the Chinese had several reasons to be more cautious about deepening the relationship. First, the United States was still supporting Taiwan vis-à-vis the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and continued weapons sales. Furthermore, China was focused on Deng's economic reforms, and most importantly, the Soviet threat seemed to have subsided.

Regardless of Chinese hesitancy to fully embrace U.S. normalization efforts, improved China-U.S relations appeared on track by the late 1980s. In assessing the effectiveness of the engagement policy and effects of normalization, which began with the Nixon administration and grew under Presidents Carter and Reagan, Kissinger commented "...despite some uncomfortable conversations and bruised egos, the United States, the People's Republic (of China), and Taiwan all emerged from the early 1980s with their core interests generally fulfilled."<sup>112</sup> For China and United States, the major achievement was successful containment of the Soviet Union. Through this joint interest, they also cooperated on intelligence sharing and support for the anti-Soviet Afghan insurgency."<sup>113</sup> Additionally, two decades of engagement with the United States had elevated China's leadership role. An example of this is China's decision to transition



from containing the Soviet Union to establishing diplomacy with the latter and Deng Xiaoping maintaining a "flexible position" on Iran after the United States had opted to support Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War because of his belief that the position would allow China to better negotiate diplomacy after the war.<sup>114</sup> Based on results, it is safe to conclude that the policy of engagement was successful and markedly more effective than containment.

Unfortunately, two important events in 1989 compelled U.S. leaders to rethink the engagement strategy with China: the PLA massacre of students at Tiananmen and the fall of the Berlin Wall that marked the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union. These two key events helped define U.S. China policy for the next two decades, during which scholars have referred to as the period of "Congagement."<sup>115</sup> On one hand, Tiananmen raised serious doubts about China's domestic policy and questioned how two decades of engagement had failed to draw China any closer to a liberal democracy. On the other hand, U.S. leaders believed that a strategy of engagement would help prevent future conflict and draw China into a new international order as a "member in good standing." After all, by the early 1990s, China had emerged as a major player in global affairs.<sup>116</sup>

Merely months after Tiananmen, President George H. W. Bush's Deputy Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, presented to Congress a list of shared strategic areas of interest for U.S.-China cooperation; presumably through continued engagement.<sup>117</sup> Despite the fallout of Tiananmen, engagement became the policy of the Bush administration and largely, became central to the Clinton administration's strategy.<sup>118</sup>

U.S.-China engagement blossomed under the Clinton administration, but with mixed results. Although candidate Clinton criticized the George H. W. Bush administration for "coddling China", less than two years after taking office, President Clinton signed an executive order implementing a policy very similar to that of President Bush.<sup>119</sup>

By summer 1993, despite several issues (for example, China's underground nuclear testing and sale of M11 missile technology to Pakistan) that called into question the effectiveness of a policy of engagement, President Clinton nonetheless pressed on with an even more aggressive policy of "comprehensive engagement", a strategy designed to increase China's stakes in international affairs. China gained most favored nation status and eventually entry into the World Trade Organization.<sup>120</sup> Under these circumstances, the Chinese economy exploded, but the PLA also benefited. The obvious gain is the mutual economic benefits; however, "comprehensive engagement" also allowed China access to advanced U.S. technology. To realists, this technology has allowed China to close the military capabilities gap with the United States, and thus, contributing to the PLA modernization of today.<sup>121</sup>

Despite the continued optimism in the Clinton administration, the Taiwan Strait incident in 1996, put this strategy in question. To dissuade Taiwanese voters from supporting the pro-independence party, the PRC fired two missiles into the Taiwan Straits. In response, the United States sent two carrier battle groups to the area. Instead of diplomatic dialogue, the Chinese met the response with strong rhetoric. According to some sources, the Chief of PLA Intelligence allegedly told an American that the United States had to decide whether it was worth "sacrificing Los Angeles to defend

Taiwan."<sup>122</sup> Once again, the United States had underestimated China's views on Taiwan.

The Taiwan incident and subsequent fallouts such as cessation of diplomatic visits also forced U.S. leaders to take a closer look at China's intentions and military modernization.<sup>123</sup> As a result, intelligence and Department of Defense agencies assessed Chinese military capabilities. The results indicated that China was undergoing major military build-up.<sup>124</sup>

Based on the perceptions of a rising PRC military threat, U.S. leaders began to bolster American military presence in the Western Pacific and strengthened ties with their traditional allies in the Pacific. In addition, the Clinton administration sought to slow the growth of China's military through the restrictions on the sale of dual-use technology and banning the sale of lethal weapons and munitions to China. Despite opposition from U.S. technology firms, these initiatives lasted through the Clinton administration and continued under President George W. Bush. Interestingly, this new "containment" strategy occurred side by side with continued healthy U.S-China trade relations, which scholars sometimes refer to as a strategy of "conengagement."<sup>125</sup>

"Congagement" has continued during much of the Obama administration. During President Obama's first year in office, there was renewed optimism in China-U.S. engagement. In this vein, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg publicly advocated a policy of "Strategic Assurance." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also called for resuming military-to-military engagements and increasing cooperation on areas of mutual interest. During her official visit to Beijing, she indicated that the United States would not allow issues sensitive to the PRC, like human rights, to interfere with

more pressing issues such as climate change, the global economic crisis, and security. At the same time, President Obama refused to meet the Dalai Lama. Critics saw the combination of these actions as appeasement towards China.<sup>126</sup>

A year after implementing "Strategic Assurance", the Obama administration realized that open engagement had little impact on influencing Chinese behavior.<sup>127</sup> China continued to behave forcefully towards its Pacific neighbors and exercised an oppressive domestic policy. In 2010, the Obama administration did an about face. Secretary Clinton harshly criticized China for censoring the internet and cyber-surveillance. Following suit, President Obama met with the Dalai Lama. As far as the Chinese are concerned, these issues are purely domestic issues, and therefore, they are solely within China's purview to resolve.<sup>128</sup>

President Obama also announced that his administration would attempt to reform export control systems, including tightening controls on advanced American technology. More importantly, the President announced the sale of F-16s to Taiwan. As seen from discussion of previous experiences of U.S. administrations, any U.S.-Taiwan bilateral action have resulted in strong reactions from China. Since 1949, China has made it clear to the United States that reunification with Taiwan had been consistently atop China's priorities. Thus, if engagement remains a U.S. policy, then the decision to upgrade Taiwan's F-16 fleet was probably not the best choice. This action resulted in Chinese suspension of military-to-military ties.<sup>129</sup>

Third, a U.S. decision to conduct a joint exercise with South Korea in response to North Korea's sinking of the South Korean ship, the Cheonan constituted a provocation from the Chinese perspective. As Major General Luo Yuan of the PLA Academy of

Military Sciences pointed out: the proximity of the exercise area to Beijing, the significance of the Yellow Sea as a historical invasion route into mainland China, and most importantly, the exercise violated the UN Security Council's call for restraint following the incident all irritated China.<sup>130</sup>

Finally, only two months after this incident, the United States supported Japan's position over an incident near the Senkaku Islands and its aftermath. Despite the Chinese's aggressive response, one author noted that while the United States and Japan joined forces to protest against China's alleged retaliatory detention of Japanese Fuji Corps workers and the possible PRC disruption of Japan's access to rare earth materials, Japan and the United States omitted that Japan's detention and indictment of the Chinese trawler captain in the same incident may also have contributed to the tensions.<sup>131</sup>

According to some observers, 2010 marked the return to "Congagement."<sup>132</sup> At the very least, the sum of all these actions, especially in a relatively short period of time, led U.S. Ambassador to China John Huntsman to comment that the United States and its allies may have been trampling "...on a couple of China's core interests."<sup>133</sup>

While it may be too early to determine whether the Obama administration's China policy will fail or succeed, the events of the last two years should provide enough data for continued refinement of the policy, and when required, drive adjustments to policy choices. Highlighted by numerous challenges, the Obama administration's China policy is certainly on a rocky path for the time being. Despite these challenges, President Obama and his senior leaders should stay on course and continue to pursue a comprehensive engagement strategy with China.

## Recommendations and Conclusion

In spite of the low possibility, a U.S.-PRC military confrontation in the Pacific would have significant political and economic implications. As such, the United States should focus on deterring and preventing a future military conflict in the Pacific. At present, it seems like there are few choices outside of "conengagement." While difficult to assess at this time how effective this approach would be, it is reasonably safe to presume that there are risks involved, the most dangerous by somehow provoking China into a military conflict. That having been said, some form of containment must occur to halt or mitigate China's expansionism. At the same time, the United States has little choice but to return to engagement as a means to assist China's transition to a more responsible world leader and major stakeholder. In implementing the next version of "conengagement", U.S. policy should not vacillate from one extreme (political/military containment) to another (unilateral concessions). Policy should utilize a mix of incentives and disincentives to help shape Chinese action and China's emergence as a responsible regional and global partner.

In pursuing a future China policy, the United States should build upon existing policies outlined in the *2011 National Security Strategy of the United States* to build a positive, constructive, and comprehensive relationship with China:

- Welcome a China that takes on a responsible leadership role in working with the U.S. and international community to advance priorities like economic recovery, climate change, and non-proliferation.
- Encourage China to make choices that contribute to peace, security, and prosperity.
- Use established Strategic and Economic Dialogue to address a broader range of issues and improve communication between militaries.

- Encourage continued reduction in tension between PRC and Taiwan.<sup>134</sup>

To assist China's transition to a responsible leadership role, the United States should also expand beyond the initiatives outlined in the *National Security Strategy*, to include cooperation in peacekeeping, anti-piracy, counter-terrorism, and humanitarian/disaster relief. China has shown the willingness to cooperate in several of these areas and the United States should facilitate future dialogue.

In encouraging China to make responsible choices, U.S. leaders must consider several issues. First, despite the rise of China's military capabilities and the likely reduction in the U.S. military budget and ground forces, the United States must maintain superiority in military capabilities, especially in military technology. This means that the United States must maintain a credible deterrent, as well as a force capable of protecting U.S. interests in the Pacific in the event deterrence fails. In doing so, the United States must also remain cognizant of China's core interests, and weigh the consequences of operating in China's EEZ and holding exercises in China's claimed territorial waters. Second, the U.S. should enhance ties with India, as well as traditional allies in the Pacific, thereby instilling confidence in its allies and partners. Finally, the United States must respect China's sovereignty. This does not mean that the United States should abandon the issues of human rights or censorship; however, U.S. leaders should limit open criticism of China over issues the latter considers domestic.

To foster a broader Strategic and Economic Dialogue to address a broader range of issues and improve communication between militaries, the United States must identify more opportunities for meaningful dialogue. While there has been an increase in strategic engagements by U.S. and Chinese national leaders under the Obama

administration, meaningful military-to-military engagements seem to have lagged.<sup>135</sup> Granted, a series of incidents has occasionally delayed or even derailed the process, but the United States should press for considerably expanded military exchanges between respective professional military education systems.<sup>136</sup> Better mutual understanding and relationship building would contribute to increased trust in the future.

Finally, to "encourage continued reduction in tension between the PRC and Taiwan," the United States must remain committed to its obligation to defend Taiwan, as well as other U.S. regional allies, while simultaneously respecting China's concerns. This delicate balance will not be easy to sustain. However, without the ability to defend a regional ally, or perception thereof, U.S. relationships with its other allies in the region will suffer. Moreover, Chinese leaders may perceive a U.S. weakness that they believe they can exploit. Consequently, despite the risk to future U.S.-China strategic dialogue, the United States must ensure Taiwan has the ability to defend itself. At the same time, the United States should maintain, as its main PRC-Taiwan goal, the task of encouraging the PRC and Taiwan to continue on a path of peaceful resolution.

Bringing all of these recommendations to fruition will be no small task. China is already a military regional power and economically a global power. Future Chinese choices will have regional and global implications. As long as the balance of power favors the United States, the goals of outlined in the *2011 National Security Strategy* may be achievable. However, should China attain military, economic, and diplomatic parity, the United States may have significantly less ability to influence China's actions. Consequently, the United States must stay actively engaged in the Pacific to ensure China lives up to its promise of "peaceful rise." For now, "engagement" seems to be



the right policy. The difficult part will be in the art of implementing that policy. However, by using a balanced approach, U.S. leaders will be able to adjust the rheostat across the spectrum of diplomacy, information, military, and economy based on changing conditions, Chinese counteractions, and opportunities. In the end, if this approach works, so would China's peaceful rise. The dragon has awakened and the U.S. must be able to deal with it effectively.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *China's National Defense in 2006*, [http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file\\_archive/070102/afddd85e6782a64dafd3f49ea6bfbc9f/2006%20White%20Paper%20on%20PRC%20National%20Defense.pdf](http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive/070102/afddd85e6782a64dafd3f49ea6bfbc9f/2006%20White%20Paper%20on%20PRC%20National%20Defense.pdf) (accessed January 17, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 67.

<sup>3</sup> Recent examples of Chinese regional assertiveness include protesting India's involvement in developing Vietnam's natural resources and dissuading BP and Exxon/Mobile's exploration of natural resources off the coast of Vietnam. China also demonstrated extreme belligerence in several incidents South China Sea. On April 29th, 2010, a Malaysian Navy missile boat pursued PRC Fisheries Administration's ship, the Yuzheng 311, when the latter steamed too close to Malaysia's Swallow/Danwan Reef. During the long chase, the Yuzheng returned to the atoll, sailing within only 300 meters of the missile boat. In June, 2010, the Yuzheng 311 again exhibited belligerent actions; this time with an Indonesian patrol boat. After the Indonesian patrol boat seized a Chinese fishing vessel operating near Indonesia's Natuna Islands, the Yusheng 311 forcibly compelled the patrol boat to release the fishing vessel. The Yusheng 311 used aggressive tactics, including pointing its main guns at the Indonesian patrol boat. Repeating the same pattern of aggression in September, 2010, Chinese Fisheries officials detained nine Vietnamese fishermen near the Paracels Island, causing a diplomatic incident. *East Asian Strategic Review 2011 Online* (May 2011): 120-122, (accessed January 15, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> China has been involved in minor skirmishes and major battles with six of its neighbors since WWII: Korea (1950-53), India (1962), Russia (1969), Vietnam (1979, 1988), the Philippines (1995), and Taiwan (1949, 1956, 1958, 1995, 1996). See Richard D. Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, 41.

<sup>5</sup> John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies: China Prepares for Uncertain War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 22.

<sup>6</sup> The 2010 Defense White Paper continues to state "China conducts military exchanges with other countries following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence." *China's National Defense in 2010*, [http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node\\_7114675.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7114675.htm) (accessed November 29, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Susan V. Lawrence and Thomas Lum, *U.S.-China Relations: Policy Issues* (Washington DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, January 12, 2011), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Huiyun Feng described in her work the arguments of other leading China scholars such as Alastair Johnston, Thomas Christensen, and Robert Ross. Feng summed up that while scholars' assessments varied (China's strategic culture as strategic parabellum or a combination of Confucian and parabellum) their conclusions are the same: China has always been, and will continue to be a revisionist power. Huiyun Feng, "Is China a Revisionist State?", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, 2009, pp. 314-334.

<sup>9</sup> Huiyun Feng, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (Madison, New York: Routledge, 2007), 31.

<sup>10</sup> Feng concludes that "scholars supporting the argument that Chinese aggressive behavior has cultural and philosophical roots either agree that the strategic parabellum culture is at the root of China's grand offensive strategy or propose that two strategic cultures, parabellum and Confucian, direct Chinese strategic behavior. According to Alistair Johnston, a strategic parabellum culture emphasize offensive strategy and "quan bian", or absolute flexibility and sensitivities to changing relative capabilities. The strategic parabellum culture is the complete opposite of the Confucian-Mencian culture which advocates non-violent means in solving conflicts. Huiyun Feng, "Is China a Revisionist State?", p. 314. See also Alistair Iain Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?", *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2003): 5-56.

<sup>11</sup> Huiyun Feng, "Is China a Revisionist State?", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 314.

<sup>12</sup> Huiyun Feng, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Allen Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 236.

<sup>15</sup> Huiyun Feng, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Although the scope of this section is on China's strategic culture, it is worth mentioning that the United States has exhibited more aggressive action and executed more military preemptive attacks than China since 1949. Sinologist Barry Buzan commented in likened China's rise to that of the United States, in that as rising states, both had engage in economic endeavors and remained aloof on high level politics and balance of power. In addition, both maintained military restraint and avoided leadership responsibilities. Barry Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible?", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, 2010, pp 5-36.

<sup>17</sup> Feng also cited "domestic situations" in addition to key leaders' beliefs and perception of external threats as factors influencing PRC use of force. Although Nie's work is focused on Chinese responses to territorial disputes and not Chinese Strategic Culture, it also explained Chinese offensive actions for Feng's case studies. Of course, his study focuses on not so much on the nature of China's leaders and domestic situation, but instead, the status of its adversaries during these conflicts.

<sup>18</sup> Nie asserted that during the same period the PRC were implementing a hard-line stance with India, China was also adopting a concessionary approach for resolving border disputes with Myanmar, Pakistan, Nepal, Mongolia, and Afghanistan. See Nie Hongyi, "Explaining Chinese Solutions to Territorial Disputes with Neighbour States", *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, (2009): 490.

<sup>19</sup> Nie Hongyi, "Explaining Chinese Solutions to Territorial Disputes with Neighbour States", 497.

<sup>20</sup> In 1969, the Chinese ambushed a Soviet company on Zhenbao Island, escalating Chinese-Soviet tension and threatened major conflict in the region. The Chinese thus counted on U.S. deterrence

against Soviet aggression. According to some analysts, the incident caused China and the United States to draw closer to one another. See Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement", *Cold War History* 1, no. 1 (2000): 21-52.

<sup>21</sup> The Mencian-Confucian paradigm advocates concessionary and non-violent approaches as opposed to offensive strategies. See Andrew Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*, Strategic Studies Institute Monograph (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, May 01, 2002), 3.

<sup>22</sup> The concept is "Active Defense" is not new. In 1955, Mao considered active defense "China's Guiding Principle". This concept continues to resonate with prominent PLA thinkers like Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi and in PLA classrooms. Additionally, according to PLA theorist, Wang Wenrong, the PLA have shifted to the offensive in all conventional local conflict since 1949 in the name of "active defense". John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies: China Prepares for Uncertain War*, 22.

<sup>23</sup> In the South China Sea China claims sovereignty over four groups of islands: Paracels, Spratlys, Macclesfield Bank, and Pratas. Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Taiwan also in part, lay claim to the same. In the East China Sea, China is involved in a sovereignty dispute with Taiwan and Japan over the Senkakus. Susan V. Lawrence and Thomas Lum, *U.S. China Relations: Policy Issues*, 27-28.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> *East Asian Strategic Review 2011 Online* (May 2011): 120, (accessed January 15, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> *East Asian Strategic Review 2011 Online* (May 2011): 121, (accessed January 15, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> The Senkaku Islands were integrated as official Japanese territory in 1895. Prior integration, there were no documentation of the islands belonging to another nation. China also claims the island, citing Chinese records of their discovery in 1403. The Island is important to both China and Japan. From the Japanese perspective, its physical position limits China's ability to expand into greater water. In contrast, the Chinese goal is to expand from the East China Sea to the Pacific. In addition, the surrounding waters are rich in oil resources. As China's strategic reach increased, tension over the islands also rose. Prior to the 2010 incident, there had been numerous protests and occupation of the uninhabited islands by Chinese protestors. There had also been at least one Chinese submarine incursion into Japanese waters near the islands in 2004. In short, the tension had existed at least from the time oil was discovered in the area in the 1970s and escalated as Chinese influence expanded. During the latest 2010 incident, Japan and some observers believe the Chinese may interrupt the flow of rare earth metals as a tactic to pressure Japan. The PRC also arrested four Japanese Fuji Corps worker for allegedly taking pictures of a military site, a move deemed by the Japanese as retaliatory. In addition, China also demanded Japanese apology and monetary compensation. In sum, China's actions seemed disproportionate. Jonathan Marcus, "Island Dispute Reveal Asia's Evolving Powers", <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11687880> (accessed March 20, 2012). Global Security, "Senkaku/Diaoyutai", <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/senkaku.htm> (accessed March 20, 2012). See also Satoshi Mako, "The Senkaku Island Incident", <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/10/25/the-senkaku-islands-incident-and-japan-china-relations> (accessed March 20, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Susan V. Lawrence and Thomas Lum, *U.S. China Relations: Policy Issues*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> *East Asian Strategic Review 2011 Online* (May 2011): 122, (accessed January 15, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> There is a disagreement between China and the U.S. over what is allowable in the EEZ. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (which China signed and the U.S. did not), allows each nation to have an EEZ 200 nautical miles from its shores. Under this convention, the nation that owns the EEZ has complete control over resources in the EEZ and the ability to limit marine scientific research by other countries. However, this convention also allows other nations freedom of navigation through it. To the United States, this also means military traffic, an assumption China contests. Ibid., 123. See also Jerome A. Cohen and John M. Van Dyke, "China's EEZ: A U.S.-China Danger Zone", <http://www.usasialaw.org/?p=4667> (accessed March 23, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Richard D. Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff award-winning article cited Robert Jervis, John Mearsheimer, and Zheng Bijian in concluding that "militarily it (China) is a mainland Asia and regional Asia-Pacific power, but it is doubtful China will become a global military power". John S. Larsen, *U.S.-China Relations: No Need to Fight*, Strategy Article, Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> A regionally assertive China challenges the United States in several ways. In addition to impacting the freedom of navigation, regional disputes may lead to military conflict due to a number of treaties and agreements the United States has with its Pacific neighbors. In fact China already challenges the United States regionally. An example is the USS Impeccable incident. In March, 2009, China interfered with the USS Impeccable's surveillance operations near Hainan Island. Operating in international waters, the Impeccable was surrounded by a PLAN intelligence ship, a Fisheries Administration vessel, a State Oceanographic Administration patrol boat, and two fishing trawlers. The fishing trawlers forced the Impeccable to stop by getting in the path of travel and also tried to snag its towed acoustic array sonar. *East Asian Strategic Review 2011 Online* (May 2011): 120-122, (accessed January 15, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Despite the enormous technology gap that existed between the U.S. and China a mere decade ago, China's emerging research, development, and production capabilities, coupled with reforms and innovation, have resulted in several impressive domestically produced high-tech systems. China was able to close the gap through foreign acquisitions and capitalizing on dual-use technology. When this technology is not available commercially or through academic research, China uses its intelligence services to acquire information through illicit means. Susan V. Lawrence and Thomas Lum, *U.S.-China Relations: Policy Issues*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2011), 41.

<sup>38</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, 42-43.

<sup>39</sup> Sam Ro, "Morgan Stanley: The Complete Guide to China's Economy in 2012 and 2013", <http://www.businessinsider.com/morgan-stanley-complete-guide-to-chinas-economy-in-2012-and-2013> (accessed December 13, 2011).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> A 7.7 to 8.4 percent GDP growth constitutes "soft landing". Kristen Gunness' also concluded that even with an annual economic growth rate at 5 percent in the future and mounting social pressures, "best estimates are that the PLA will receive the funding it needs and will likely not have to substantially cut military programs in the future". Gunness also cited that RAND Analysts, based on a 2005 study, predicted PRC Defense budget in 2025 at \$180 billion. However, according to the Pentagon current analysis, the PRC actual 2011 defense budget is already at \$180 billion. *"Building a Modern Military: The*

*Economic Crisis and its Impact on the Chinese People's Liberation Army*", [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/02\\_china\\_military\\_gunness.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/02_china_military_gunness.aspx) (accessed December 13, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> James C. Mulvenon et al, *Chinese Responses to U.S. Military Transformation and the Implications for the Department of Defense* (Washington DC: U.S. Library of Congress, RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2006), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Xii.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., xiii.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Chinese conventional missiles may be able to strike out to 1500-2000 kilometers from China's eastern coast, meaning the PRC could have the capability to target U.S. ships operating in the Western Pacific and bases on Guam. See also *"China's Evolving Conventional Strategic Strike Capabilities"*, [http://project2049.net/documents/chinese\\_anti\\_ship\\_ballistic\\_missile\\_asbm.pdf](http://project2049.net/documents/chinese_anti_ship_ballistic_missile_asbm.pdf) (accessed March 27, 2012).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> *China's National Defense in 2010* (accessed November 29, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>58</sup> Deng believed that war was highly improbable, and if it were to occur, would be local vice global; thus his priorities focused on the economy and foreign policy, not military transformation. John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies: China Prepares for Uncertain War*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 18.

<sup>60</sup> Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, 67.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 37.

<sup>63</sup> *China's National Defense in 2010*, 7 (accessed November 29, 2011).

<sup>64</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 5.

<sup>65</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

<sup>67</sup> *China's National Defense in 2010*, 7 (accessed November 29, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, 148.

<sup>69</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>72</sup> *China's National Defense in 2010*, 7 (accessed November 29, 2011).

<sup>73</sup> Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, 232.

<sup>74</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>76</sup> Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, 3.

<sup>77</sup> The 2010 China Defense White Paper declared that the PRC achieved its goals for national defense science, technology, and industry set forth in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2006-2010 and "advanced core competence of defense related industries have been built." Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 6.

<sup>78</sup> Angry over the Chinese Communist Party's religious policies, Tibetans have also become increasingly restive. In response, according to the 2009 U.S. State Department Human Rights Report for Tibet, China reacted with "extra judicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests..." Robert M. Gates, "Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009" in *Measuring China's Military Might: China in the 21st Century*, ed. Samuel E. Fleischer (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2010), 56.

<sup>79</sup> Robert M. Gates, "Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009" in *Measuring China's Military Might: China in the 21st Century*, 56.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>81</sup> 2011 U.S. Congressional Report, *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*. [http://www.uscc.gov/annual\\_report/2011/annual\\_report\\_full\\_11.pdf](http://www.uscc.gov/annual_report/2011/annual_report_full_11.pdf) (accessed 5 April, 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Eric Scissors, "Tools to Rebuild U.S.-China Economic Relationships" Background, no. 2590 (August 8, 2011).

<sup>83</sup> As described in the next section of the paper, U.S.-China Policy had fluctuated over the decades and different administrations.

<sup>84</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 64.

<sup>85</sup> James I. Matray, "Beijing and the Paper Tiger: The Impact of the Korean War on Sino-American Relations" *International Journal of Korean Studies* XV, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 160.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-158.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 65.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> China had five aims after the Korean War: National Security, China as Preeminence Nation in Asia, Reunification, Status as World Power, and "Equal Partner" with the United States. James I. Matray, "Beijing and the Paper Tiger: The Impact of the Korean War on Sino-American Relations", pp. 160-166.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>93</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A history of Sino-American Relation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 180-195.

<sup>94</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 64.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>99</sup> Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), pp. 349-350.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 355-356.

<sup>104</sup> Arthur Waldren, "What the One China Policy Really Means". *Asian Wall Street Journal Online*, <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/asia/what-the-one-china-policy-really-means-article/> (accessed April 6, 2012).

<sup>105</sup> Taiwan Relations Act, Public Law 96-8, *Online*, <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/tra02.htm> (accessed, April 6, 2012).

<sup>106</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 82.

<sup>107</sup> Kevin Pollpeter, *U.S.-China Security Management: Assessing the Military to Military Relationship* (Washington DC: U.S. Library of Congress, RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2004), pp. 9-11.

<sup>108</sup> Expanded military-to-military relationship allowed for defense attaches and officer exchanges. *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 83-85.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

<sup>115</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 88.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Charles A. Goldman, *Managing Policy Toward China Under Clinton: The Changing Role of Economics* (Washington DC: U.S. Library of Congress, RAND National Defense Research Institute, July 1995), 4.

<sup>120</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 92-93.

<sup>121</sup> Richard D. Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, pp 97-111.

<sup>122</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 97.

<sup>123</sup> Despite the initial diplomatic fallout, PRC Defense Minister Chi Hao Tien visited the United States in December 1996. During this visit, Minister Chi Hao Tien had private office calls with President Clinton and Defense Secretary William Perry. He also received full military honors at the Pentagon. [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/july-dec96/china\\_12-17.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/july-dec96/china_12-17.html) (accessed April 6, 2012).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.



<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>127</sup> It is worthwhile to note that a year is an extremely short time to assess the effects of an engagement. Many factors, including domestic pressure, that may very drive a shift in strategy.

<sup>128</sup> Nina Hachigian and Winny Chen, "President Obama's Progressive Policy: Assessing the U.S.-China Relation Today and What Lies Ahead", 4.

<sup>129</sup> William Wan, "Pressure Builds for F-16 sales to Taiwan". *Washington Post Online*, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pressure-builds-for-f-16-sale-to-taiwan/2011/07/01/gHQAdAPLyH\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pressure-builds-for-f-16-sale-to-taiwan/2011/07/01/gHQAdAPLyH_story.html) (accessed March 26, 2012).

<sup>130</sup> "Why China Opposes U.S.-South Korean Military Exercises in the Yellow Sea", *People's Daily Online*, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90780/91342/7069743.html> (accessed March 26, 2012).

<sup>131</sup> Sourabh Gupta, "China-Japan Trawler Incident: Reviewing the Dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Waters", <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/12/06/china-japan-trawler-incident-review-of-legalities-understandings-and-practices-in-disputed-senkakudaioyu-waters/> (accessed 25 March, 2012).

<sup>132</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, *Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for mastery in Asia*, 115.

<sup>133</sup> Nina Hachigian and Winny Chen, "President Obama's Progressive Policy: Assessing the U.S.-China Relation Today and What Lies Ahead", Center for American Progress, (May 2010): 4.

<sup>134</sup> Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington DC: The White House, May 2010), 42.

<sup>135</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Annual Report to Congress*, 16.

<sup>136</sup> The U.S. Congress limits the scope of mil to mil in the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, barring "inappropriate exposure" to various subjects. As such, the law has to change to allow for professional military education exchanges. Susan V. Lawrence and Thomas Lum, *U.S. China Relations: Policy Issues*, 25.

